



Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 21 Number 8 August 2024

FIELD TRIP-1: Sunday, August 11, 2024, 6.30AM: Mokila. Meeting Point(s): Morine Bakery, Narsingi, 05:30AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Gokul Krishna Addanki (Mobile: 99453-46585)

Mokila is a dry-deciduous scrub habitat which holds rich birding. So please come and enjoy a Sunday outing, watch some lovely birds and spend some time out in nature. Some common species found in this area: Eurasian Collared Dove, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Small Minivet, Bay-backed Shrike, Siberian Stonechat, Eurasian Hoopoe, Wire-tailed Swallow and many more.

FIELD TRIP-2: Sunday, August 25, 2024, 7.30AM: Edulabad, Hyderabad. Meeting Point(s): NGRI Metro Station, Tarnaka-Uppal Road, 07:00AM. Trip Coordinator(s): JVD Moorthy (Mobile: 98494-70411)

Edulabad Lake, located near Ghatkesar, is home to about 170 species of birds, including many waders by the shore. The newly built pathway gives the near perfect elevation to birders for easy spotting. The gorgeous Red Avadavats and Tricolored Munias are the Guests of Honour that are an eye feast here.

Both trips will be half-day trips, so carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required. Covid protocols will be followed; please ensure you wear masks, carry a sanitiser and maintain social distancing. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. New Deccan Birders hats and caps will be available for purchase; please carry adequate cash.

Trip Report: Kenya, July 06-08, 2023

Text & Photos: Hemlata G Paranjape



Masai Giraffe

It was July 06, 2023 when, as a wildlife enthusiast, I geared up for my upcoming tour to Kenya. Our tour was having two legs: (1) Birding at Kenya and (2) Wildlife at Masai Mara

(Migration of Zebras and Wildebeests) from Tanzania to Kenya. This write-up focuses on the first leg of the trip.

Day-1: Naiyasha

It was early morning – 6:00AM – when our flight landed at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi. Our guide was waiting for us for our journey to Naivasha, which was our first destination.



Grey-backed Fiscal

On the way we got only one bird, the Grey-backed Fiscal, but as soon as we reached Naivasha, our real birding experience started and it was amazing to see beautiful birds around.



White-breasted Cormorant



Long-tailed Cormorant & Pied Kingfisher



Giant Kingfisher

From Cormorants, Kingfishers and Woodpeckers to Flycatchers, Cisticolas and Doves, I was busy capturing nature's beauty through my lens and enjoying my birding thoroughly.



Green Woodhoopoe



Nubian Woodpecker



Rattling Cisticola



Black Crake



Red-eyed Dove



African Fish Eagle

Our day came to an end at about 4:00PM, after which we had a delicious meal and went to bed with only the hopes of having another amazing day.

The list of birds I captured at Naivasha is as follows:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	African Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga vocifer</i>	21	Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
2	African Grey Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos goertae</i>	22	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>
3	African House Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
4	African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	24	Long-tailed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>
5	African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	25	Nubian Woodpecker	<i>Campethera nubica</i>
6	African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	26	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
7	Baglafaecht Weaver	<i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>	27	Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>
8	Black Crake	<i>Zapornia flavirostra</i>	28	Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
9	Black-lored Babbler	<i>Turdoides sharpei</i>	29	Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
10	Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	30	Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
11	Cape Robin-chat	<i>Dessonornis caffer</i>	31	Ruppell's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis purpuroptera</i>
12	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	32	Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>
13	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	33	Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
14	Fischer's Lovebird	<i>Agapornis fischeri</i>	34	Stout Cisticola	<i>Cisticola robustus</i>
15	Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	35	Superb Starling	<i>Lamprotornis superbus</i>
16	Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>	36	Variable Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>
17	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	37	White-browed Sparrow-weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>
18	Green Wood Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	38	White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis fischeri</i>
19	Grey-backed Fiscal	<i>Lanius excubitoroides</i>	39	Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
20	Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	40	White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>

Day-2: Aberdare

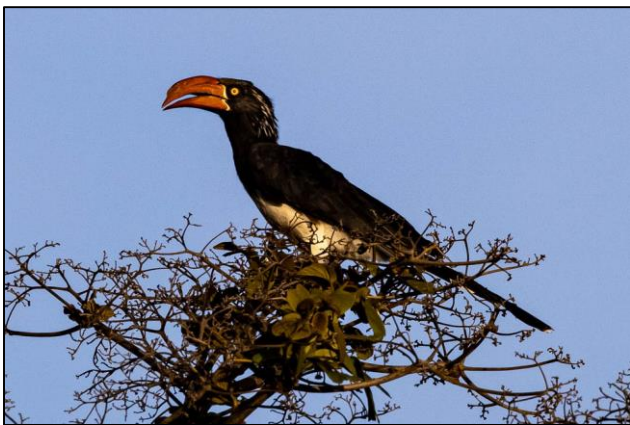
Today we were heading for Aberdare, which was quite a long journey, eased by birding on the way and capturing the beauty of nature.



African Grey Flycatcher



Collared Sunbird



Crowned Hornbill

Today was the day of Buzzards, Eagles, Flycatchers, Mousebirds and Sunbirds, to Hornbills, Weavers, Finches, Thrushes, and Seed-eaters.

I was really happy to see the variety of birds, and shooting them with my camera was another level of enjoyment.



Augur Buzzard



African Dusky Flycatcher



Red-billed Firefinch



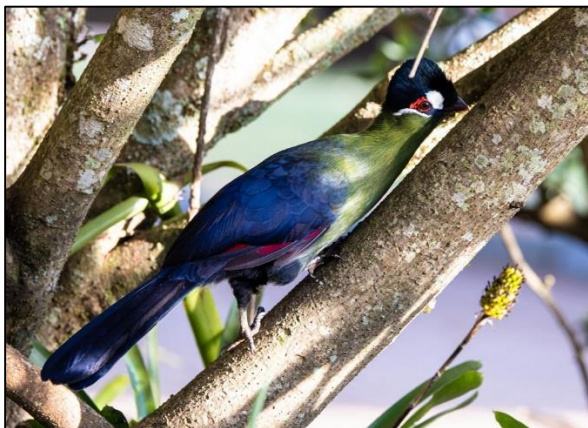
Northern Pied Babbler



Abyssinian Thrush



White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher



Hartlaub's Turaco



Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird

Once more, at 4:00PM, the day came to a conclusion with pleasant recollections of Aberdare. The Aberdare Country Resort was a great place to spend an evening. A great stay with delicious cuisine was guaranteed, and the evening was enjoyable.

The list of birds captured at Aberdare is as follows:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Abyssinian Thrush	<i>Turdus abyssinicus</i>	16	Hartlaub's Turaco	<i>Tauraco hartlaubi</i>
2	African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	17	Heuglin's White-eye	<i>Zosterops poliogaster</i>
3	African Grey Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis microrhynchus</i>	18	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
4	African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	19	Mourning Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>
5	Augur Buzzard	<i>Buteo augur</i>	20	Northern Pied Babbler	<i>Turdoides hypoleuca</i>
6	Baglafecht Weaver	<i>Ploceus baglafecht</i>	21	Northern Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>
7	Blue-naped Mousebird	<i>Urocolius macrourus</i>	22	Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
8	Bronze Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia kilimensis</i>	23	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
9	Buff-crested Bustard	<i>Lophotis gindiana</i>	24	Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
10	Cape Robin-chat	<i>Dessonornis caffer</i>	25	Spotted Morning-thrush	<i>Cichladusa guttata</i>
11	Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>	26	Streaky Seedeater	<i>Crithagra striolata</i>
12	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	27	Thick-billed Seedeater	<i>Crithagra burtoni</i>
13	Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	28	White-browed Sparrow-weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>
14	Crowned Hornbill	<i>Tockus alboterminatus</i>	29	White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis fischeri</i>
15	Donaldson Smith's Sparrow-weaver	<i>Plocepasser donaldsoni</i>	30	Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>

Day 3: Kinangop

Today was a day for grassland birding at Kinangop. After an early morning start we reached Kinangop grasslands around 9:00AM. It is a fantastic area to watch and shoot the birds with the lens.



Jackson's Widowbird



Hildebrandt's Starling



Levaillant's Cisticola

It had patches of marshy land and grasslands where we got Widowbirds, Hawks, Sunbirds, Longclaws, Stonechats, Waxbills, Starlings, Bee-eaters, Cisticolas, Fiscals and Anteaters, to Hornbills, Flycatchers, Seed-eaters and Ducks.



Speke's Weaver



Lesser Blue-eared Starling



Yellow-throated Longclaw



Wing-snapping Cisticola



Yellow-billed Duck



Common Waxbill



Silvery-cheeked Hornbill



Kenya Rufous Sparrow

Another amazing day, and with that the short trip, came to an end, leaving lasting memories.

The list of birds captured at Kinangop is as follows:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	African Citril	<i>Serinus citrinelloides</i>	20	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>
2	African Harrier-hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>	21	Long-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes progne</i>
3	African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	22	Northern Anteater Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla aethiops</i>
4	Baglafecht Weaver	<i>Ploceus baglafecht</i>	23	Northern Fiscal	<i>Lanius humeralis</i>
5	Brimstone Canary	<i>rithagra sulphurata</i>	24	Red-cowled Widowbird	<i>Euplectes laticauda</i>
6	Bronze Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia kilimensis</i>	25	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
7	Cape Robin-chat	<i>Dessonornis caffer</i>	26	Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>
8	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	27	Sharpe's Longclaw	<i>Hemimacronyx sharpei</i>
9	Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	28	Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes brevis</i>
10	Dusky Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia lugens</i>	29	Speke's Weaver	<i>Ploceus spekei</i>
11	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	30	Streaky Seedeater	<i>Crithagra striolata</i>
12	Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	31	Superb Starling	<i>Lamprotornis superbus</i>
13	Hildebrandt's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis hildebrandti</i>	32	Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
14	Jackson's Widowbird	<i>Euplectes jacksoni</i>	33	White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis fischeri</i>
15	Kenya Rufous Sparrow	<i>Passer rufocinctus</i>	34	Wing-snapping Cisticola	<i>Cisticola ayresii</i>
16	Lesser Blue-eared Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chloropterus</i>	35	Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
17	Lesser Jacana	<i>Microparra capensis</i>	36	Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>
18	Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	37	Yellow-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
19	Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>			

Some other photos taken during the trip:



Superb Starling



Superb Starling juvenile



Stout Cisticola



Ruppell's Starling



Egyptian Goose



Hadada Ibis



Common Bulbul



Hamerkop



Cape Robin-chat



Fork-tailed Drongo (aka African Drongo)



Black-lored Babbler



African House Sparrow



African Grey Woodpecker



Spectacled Weaver



Heuglin's White-eye



African Harrier-hawk



Brimstone Canary



Common Hippopotamus



Common Striped Skink



Ochre Bush Squirrel



Domestic Horse with Oxpecker sp



Blacksmith Lapwing



Fischer's Lovebird



African Jacana



African Sacred Ibis



Baglafaecht Weaver male



Baglafaecht Weaver female



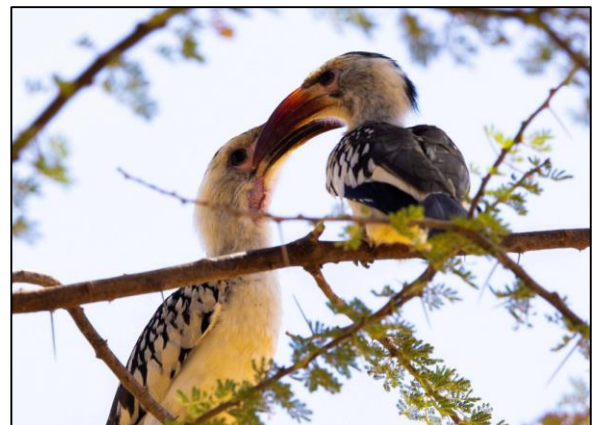
Baglafaecht Weaver juvenile



Bronze Sunbird



Mourning Collared Dove



Northern Red-billed Hornbill



Streaky Seedeater



Thick-billed Seedeater



Dusky Turtle Dove



Long-tailed Widowbird



African Stonechat



Scarlet-chested Sunbird female



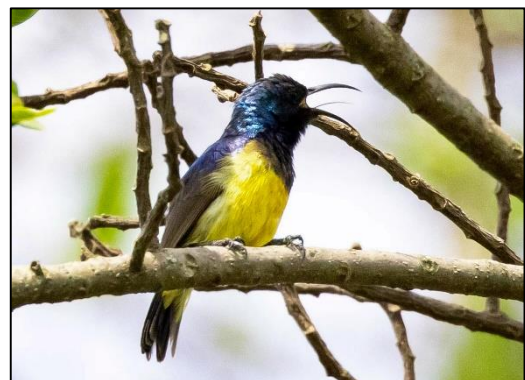
Wattled Starling male



African Pied Wagtail



White-browed Sparrow-weaver



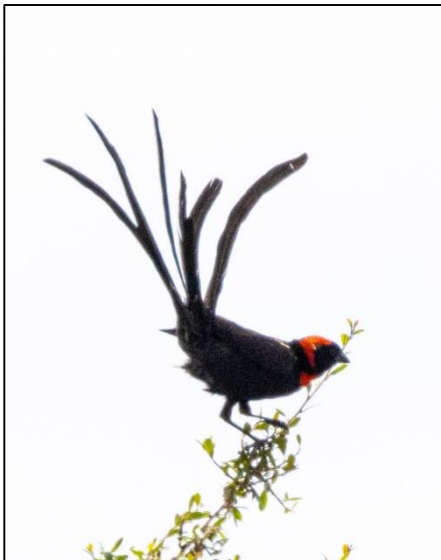
Variable Sunbird



Pink-backed Pelican



Ring-necked Dove



Red-cowled Widowbird



Scarlet-chested Sunbird male



Sharpe's Longclaw



Wattled Starling female



Hadada Ibis



Speckled Mousebird



Pied Kingfisher with catch



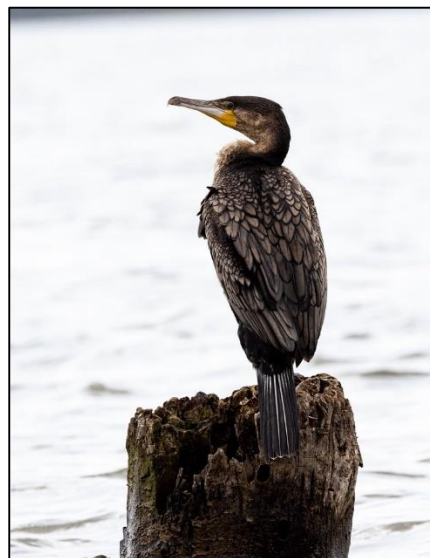
Green Woodhoopoe pair



White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher



Common Scimitarbill



Great Cormorant



Northern Fiscal



Intermediate Egret



Spotted Morning-thrush

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Trip Report: Mahavir Harina Vanasthali National Park, March 26, 2023

Text: Shruti Prakash; Photos: Dr G Samuel Sukumar



Blackbuck adult & young

Mahavir Vanasthipuram National Deer Park offers a serene respite from the city's chaos. Our Sunday morning excursion commenced with a walk through lavender plantations, where we observed a variety of birds and animals. Early sightings included Blackbuck, Spotted Deer and the Purple-rumped Sunbirds. Peacocks were also present along the trail, further enhancing the park's allure.

The park features a 3-kilometre circumference walking path. Beyond the lavender plantations, the park transitions into grassy and shrub-filled landscapes dotted with scattered trees. In this area, we spotted many common birds – some of them were the Spotted Dove, Indian Robin, Southern Coucal, and Tickell's Blue Flycatcher.



Indian Robin male



Spotted Dove

At the core of the park lies a pond. Upon entering this area, we observed a White-browed Bulbul perched above us and a Wild Boar swiftly passing to our right.



Indian Pond Heron



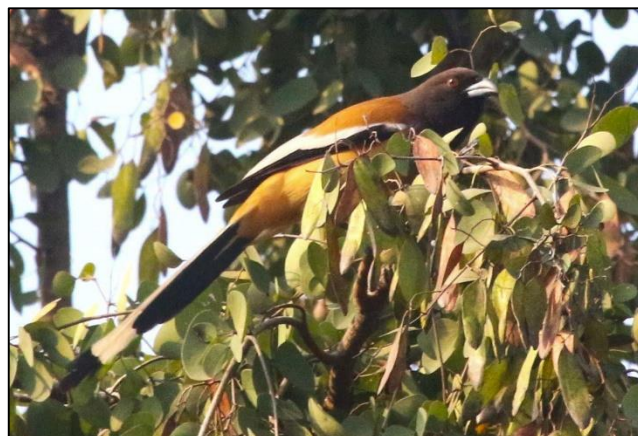
Spot-billed Duck pair



Common Kingfisher



Indian Moorhen



Indian Treepie

The pond's vicinity was teeming with water birds; some of the birds identified were the Pond Heron, Spot-billed Duck, White-breasted Waterhen, White-browed Wagtail, and Common Kingfisher.

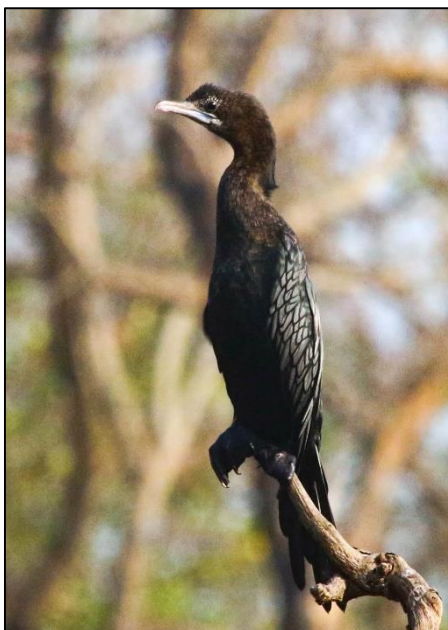


One-legged White-browed Wagtail



The group during the walk

As we commenced our walk back, we were delighted by the sight of a Rufous (aka Indian) Treepie and a Small Minivet in flight, accompanied by the “brain-fever” call in the background.



Little Cormorant



The group during the outing

In the end, we assembled under a tree in the park to discuss the day's highlights, undertake a photo session, and enjoy a sweet meal together.

During our gathering, a Pale-billed Flowerpecker and a Greenish Warbler perched above us, providing a fitting end to our serene visit to the park. Overall, the experience was both enjoyable and educational.

The full list of birds seen during the trip:

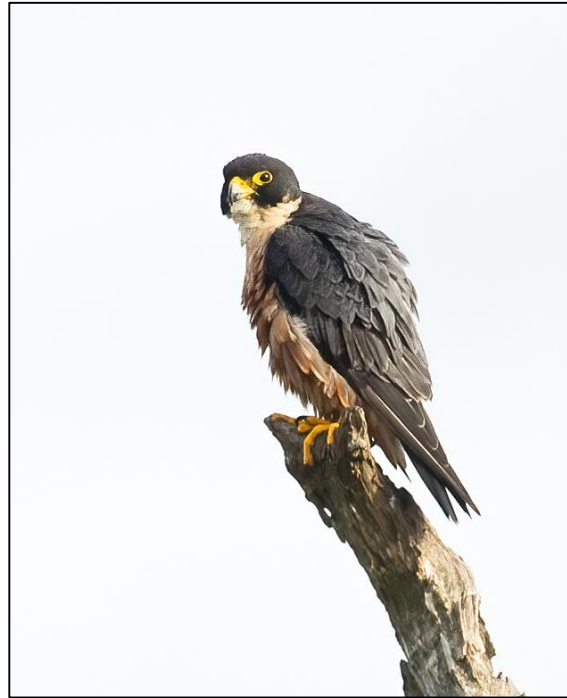
Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>	22	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
2	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>	23	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>
3	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	24	Southern Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
4	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>	25	Greenish Warbler	<i>Seicercus trochiloides</i>
5	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	26	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
6	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>	27	Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>
7	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	28	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
8	Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	29	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
9	White-breasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	30	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
10	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	31	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>
11	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	32	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
12	Indian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus kundoo</i>	33	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
13	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	34	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
14	White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	35	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
15	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	36	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
16	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>	37	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
17	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	38	Blue Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
18	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	39	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
19	Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	40	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
20	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>	41	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
21	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>			

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*)



Shaheen Falcon (Masinagudi, July 03, 2024)

Order: Falconiformes
Family: Falconidae
Genus: *Falco*
Species: *F. peregrinus*
Sub-species: *F. p. peregrinator*
Size: 25-30 cm

Description & distribution: The Shaheen Falcon, also known as the Black Shaheen, is a small, powerful falcon with dark slaty upperparts, black head, nape and moustachial stripes, rufous underparts with fine dark barring on belly and thighs, and a white throat and belly. The full black face mask is clearly delineated from the throat. It has distinctive rufous underwing coverts that are clearly visible in flight which, along with the rufous underparts, help separate it from the Peregrine Falcon (*F. p. calidus*). It has a strong dark bill with yellow around the base and nostrils, yellow feet with dark talons, and barred uppertail. The sexes are alike – although the female is larger – while the juvenile has darker brownish-black upperparts than the adult and paler underparts with heavily-barred flanks and striped breast. Birds in South India and Sri Lanka may show an almost completely black hood with no distinct moustachial stripe, and almost uniform underparts.

A sub-species of the Peregrine Falcon, the Shaheen Falcon is resident practically all through the hilly regions of the Indian

subcontinent, including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and south-eastern China. There have also been occasional records from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Habitat & behaviour: The Shaheen Falcon is usually seen singly, or in pairs on cliffs and rock faces. They typically mate for life. Known for its swift and powerful flight – up to 240kmph in level flight and up to 320kmph while diving – it is an efficient hunter, usually hunting its prey in flight, striking the prey in mid-air with its powerful hind claw and taking it away to a favoured perch to be consumed. Flight is usually a few rapid wingbeats interspersed with long glides. Its diet usually consists of other birds like ducks, partridges, pigeons and parakeets, which has also enabled it to adapt well to urban surroundings.

Nesting: The Shaheen Falcon breeds mainly between March and May. The nest is a platform of twigs and grass on a ledge on a cliff face. The usual clutch consists of 2 or 3 pinkish-buff to pinkish-red eggs, variably marked with purplish or dark brick-red marks.

Local name: The Shaheen Falcon is known as 'Bhyri' or 'Bhyri bacha' (for female and male respectively) in Hindi, 'Bhyri dega' in Telugu, and 'Kayal pullu' in Malayalam.

* * *

For Private Circulation Only

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18

For information, write to: Deccan Birders, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **Website:** www.deccanbirders.org. **E-group:** <http://groups.google.co.in/group/deccanbirders>. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)